

art of all, without which the others quickly
 die, the art
 of living, I come to feel more and more that
 the world
 needs perpetually to go back to Greece. Yet
 Greece does
 not mean simply Athens. That is too often
 assumed.

Athens became the intellectual capital of
 Hellas. But the
 best things are not always to be found in
 capitals. There
 is much that is silly and squalid in Attic, as in
 all, history;
 much that betrays a meaner sense of the
 poetry of life,
 once the Persian Wars are over, than the
 annals of the
 Roman Republic. And of poetic literature,
 with the
 magnificent exception of the Attic Drama,
 hardly anyone
 seems to realise how sterile Athens herself
 always re-
 mained. The Islands, Ionia, Magna Graecia,
 even the
 despised 'hoggish' Boeotia of Hesiod and
 Pindar, even
 academic Alexandria, were the real sources
 of that great
 and unfailing stream of non-dramatic
 poetry to which
 Athens contributed only such trifles as the
 worthy poli-
 tical verses of a Solon. It is in those little
 cities, happily
 ignored by history, remembered today only
 for a poet's
 name, or for a temple still lovely in its ruins
 upon some
 barren hill, that the imagination loves,
 swallow-like, to
 build.

Such a city was Thespieae, to which the
 Ascra of Hesiod
 belonged; its daily life through centuries is
 forgotten now
 as if it had never been- We know only that
 there Love
 and the Muses were honoured with special

festivals; and
that strangers came from far to see its Eros
by Praxiteles.
We know also that when the armies of King
Xerxes swept
flooding over Othrys, and at Thermopylae
The Spartans on the sea-wet rock sat down and
combed their hair;
alone of Greeks north of the Isthmus seven
hundred from
Thespieae chose to die beside the three
hundred of Leoni-
das. 'Fair their fate', wrote Simonides in his
dirge for the
fallen; and in that one word 'fair'—
KccA6\$—with its